VIKRAM DEV UNIVERSITY STUDENT WINS SECOND PRIZE IN ENGLISH SHORT STORY AT ODISHA INTER-UNIVERSITY LITERARY & CULTURAL COMPETITION 2026

Jeypore Student Union

Jeypore, March 31. 2026 (Tuesday) : Bringing laurels to the undivided Koraput region, Rohan Kumar Pattanaik, a postgraduate student of the Department of English at Vikram Dev University, Jeypore, has secured Second Position in the English Short Story Competition at the Odisha Inter-University Literary & Cultural Competition 2026, hosted by Ravenshaw University, Cuttack.

The four-day state-level literary and cultural festival was held from March 28 to March 31, 2026, following university-level selection rounds conducted in February. Organised by Ravenshaw University, the event brought together nearly 600 students from 17 public universities across Odisha, making it one of the state's largest inter-university platforms for celebrating creativity, talent, and cultural exchange.

Participants competed in 22 different categories, spanning literature, fine arts, theatre, music, dance, photography, painting, short films, debate, flash talks, mixed media, classical solo performances, skits, and several other cultural disciplines. The competition provided young artists and writers with an opportunity to showcase their skills before eminent academicians and cultural experts from across the state.

Representing Vikram Dev University, Rohan Kumar Pattanaik impressed the judges with his original short story, "The Temptation Sphere: A Slow Poison," a philosophical allegory that explores the dangers of unchecked temptation, comfort, and the gradual loss of purpose.

The story follows Roy, a gifted young archer destined to become the saviour of his village. His life changes after he discovers a magical lamp inhabited by a mysterious spirit capable of displaying anything his heart desires through an enchanted sphere. What begins as innocent curiosity gradually turns into an addiction to comfort, endless entertainment, and indulgence. As Roy distances himself from discipline and responsibility, he unknowingly abandons the very qualities that once made him the hope of his community.

In the story's gripping climax, the spirit reveals itself as the devil and confronts Roy with a vision of the life he could have lived had he remained steadfast in his purpose. The powerful concluding line *"Hell is the place where the person you are now meets the person you could have been"* captures the story's central message on self-discipline, moral responsibility, and the consequences of surrendering to temptation.

According to sources associated with the competition, the story drew appreciation for its symbolic narrative, philosophical depth, and contemporary relevance. By weaving together elements of fantasy with a timeless moral lesson, the work stood out among entries from universities across the state.

The achievement has been welcomed by the academic fraternity of Vikram Dev University, with faculty members and fellow students congratulating Rohan for bringing recognition to the university on a prestigious state-level platform. His success also reflects the growing literary talent emerging from southern Odisha and underscores the increasing participation of students from the region in major inter-university academic and cultural events.

For Jeypore and the wider Koraput region, Rohan’s accomplishment is a matter of pride, reinforcing the message that excellence in literature and the arts continues to flourish beyond the state's metropolitan areas.